

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

Please amend the claims as set forth hereinbelow.

**1-22. (cancelled)**

23. **(currently amended)** A method for multiply-integrated ~~system~~ for product inventory, sales, and distribution, comprising the steps of:  
under control of a programmed computer processor, the programmed computer processor being programmed therefor, automatically receiving product identifying information, product pricing information, and product inventory information from multiple participating product suppliers and entering the information into a supplier database, the supplier database being operatively linked to the programmed computer processor and including product identifying information, product inventory information, and product pricing information for the multiple independent participating product suppliers, wherein:  
the multiple independent participating product suppliers may include any of participating product manufacturers, participating product distributors, and participating product retailers,  
the multiple independent participating product suppliers include at least one participating product distributor and at least one participating product retailer,  
the multiple independent participating product suppliers include at least two participating product distributors or at least two participating product retailers, and  
the multiple independent product suppliers offer products of a common product category;  
under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer processor being programmed therefor, automatically receiving, from multiple participating product suppliers, order information pertaining to orders placed by multiple product purchasers with the multiple participating product suppliers;

28 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
29 processor being programmed therefor, automatically entering the received  
30 order information into an order database, the order database being operatively  
31 linked to the programmed computer processor and including order information  
32 pertaining to  
33 pending orders placed with multiple participating product suppliers by multiple  
34 independent product purchasers, wherein the multiple independent  
35 product purchasers may include any of participating product  
36 manufacturers, participating product distributors, participating product  
37 retailers, non-participating product manufacturers, non-participating  
38 product distributors, non-participating product retailers, and retail product  
39 purchasers, and  
40 fulfilled orders placed with multiple participating product suppliers by multiple  
41 product purchasers and fulfilled by the multiple participating product  
42 suppliers;  
43 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
44 processor being programmed therefor, automatically searching, for each order  
45 placed by each product purchaser, the supplier database to attempt to locate  
46 each ordered product listed in the placed order and available for delivery from  
47 a corresponding participating product supplier;  
48 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
49 processor being programmed therefor, automatically transmitting instructions  
50 for delivery, for each order placed by each product purchaser, of each ordered  
51 and located product to the product purchaser from the corresponding  
52 participating product supplier, thereby causing fulfillment of the order;  
53 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
54 processor being programmed therefor, automatically updating order  
55 information in the order database pertaining to each delivered product;  
56 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
57 processor being programmed therefor, automatically updating the product  
58 inventory information pertaining to each delivered product in the supplier  
59 database; and

under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer processor being programmed therefor, automatically creating and transmitting a financial accounting record for each delivered product,

wherein:

at least a portion of the delivery instructions for order fulfillment are transmitted to one participating product retailer in response to an order placed with another of the participating product retailers; or

at least a portion of the delivery instructions for order fulfillment are transmitted to one participating product distributor in response to an order placed with or delivery instructions received by another of the participating product distributors.

24. **(original)** The method of Claim 23, wherein the multiple independent participating product suppliers may further include product content providers.

25. **(previously presented)** The method of Claim 23, further comprising the step of: under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer processor being programmed therefor, automatically transmitting instructions for shipment of a delivered product from a corresponding participating product supplier to the participating product supplier with whom the product purchaser placed the order.

26. **(original)** The method of Claim 25, wherein:  
the corresponding participating product supplier is a participating product retailer;  
and  
the participating product supplier with whom the product purchaser placed the order is a participating product retailer.

27. **(previously presented)** The method of Claim 23, further comprising the step of: under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer processor being programmed therefor, automatically transmitting instructions

4 for shipment of a delivered product from a corresponding participating product  
5 supplier to the product purchaser.

1 28. **(original)** The method of Claim 27, wherein:

2 the corresponding participating product supplier is a participating product retailer;  
3 and  
4 the participating product supplier with whom the product purchaser placed the  
5 order is a participating product retailer.

1 29. **(previously presented)** The method of Claim 23, further comprising:

2 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
3 processor being programmed therefor, enabling a first participating product  
4 supplier to select an eligible subset of the multiple participating product  
5 suppliers from which ordered products, listed in orders placed with the first  
6 participating supplier, may be delivered to a product purchaser; or

7 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
8 processor being programmed therefor, enabling a first participating product  
9 supplier to select an eligible subset of products available from another of the  
10 multiple participating product supplier from which ordered products, listed in  
11 orders placed with the first participating supplier, may be delivered to a  
12 product purchaser.

1 30. **(previously presented)** The method of Claim 23, further comprising:

2 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
3 processor being programmed therefor, enabling a first participating product  
4 supplier to select an eligible subset of the multiple participating product  
5 suppliers for which ordered products, listed in orders placed with the eligible  
6 subset of the multiple participating product suppliers, are available for delivery  
7 to a product purchaser; or

8 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
9 processor being programmed therefor, enabling a first participating product  
10 supplier to select an eligible subset of products available from the first

participating product supplier from which ordered products, listed in orders placed with another of the multiple participating product suppliers, are available for delivery to a product purchaser.

31. **(currently amended)** A method for multiply-integrated ~~system~~ for product inventory, sales, and distribution, comprising the steps of:
- under control of a programmed computer processor, the programmed computer processor being programmed therefor, automatically receiving product identifying information, product pricing information, and product inventory information from multiple participating product retailers and entering the information into a retailer database, the retailer database being operatively linked to the programmed computer processor and including product identifying information, product inventory information, and product pricing information for the multiple independent participating product retailers, wherein the multiple independent product retailers offer products of a common product category;
- under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer processor being programmed therefor, automatically receiving, from multiple participating product retailers, order information pertaining to orders placed by multiple product purchasers with the multiple participating product retailers;
- under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer processor being programmed therefor, automatically entering the received order information into an order database, the order database being operatively linked to the programmed computer processor and including order information pertaining to pending orders placed with multiple participating product retailers by multiple independent product purchasers, wherein the multiple independent product purchasers may include any of participating product manufacturers, participating product distributors, participating product retailers, non-participating product manufacturers, non-participating product distributors, non-participating product retailers, and retail product purchasers, and

fulfilled orders placed with multiple participating product retailers by multiple product purchasers and fulfilled by the multiple participating product retailers;

under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer processor being programmed therefor, automatically searching, for each order placed by each product purchaser, the retailer database to attempt to locate each ordered product listed in the placed order and available for delivery from a corresponding participating product retailer;

under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer processor being programmed therefor, automatically transmitting instructions for delivery, for each order placed by each product purchaser, of each ordered and located product to the product purchaser from the corresponding participating product supplier, thereby causing fulfillment of the order, wherein at least a portion of the delivery instructions for order fulfillment are transmitted to one participating product retailer in response to an order placed with another of the participating product retailers;

under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer processor being programmed therefor, automatically updating order information in the order database pertaining to each delivered product;

under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer processor being programmed therefor, automatically updating the product inventory information pertaining to each delivered product in the retailer database; and

under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer processor being programmed therefor, automatically creating a financial accounting record for each delivered product.

32. **(previously presented)** The method of Claim 23, wherein the product inventory information is stored in the supplier database in a search table common to the multiple participating product suppliers.

- 1 33. **(currently amended)** A method for multiply-integrated ~~system~~ for product  
2 inventory, sales, and distribution, comprising the steps of:  
3 under control of a programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
4 processor being programmed therefor, automatically receiving product  
5 identifying information, product pricing information, and product inventory  
6 information from multiple participating product suppliers and entering the  
7 information into a supplier database, the supplier database being operatively  
8 linked to the programmed computer processor and including product  
9 identifying information, product inventory information, and product pricing  
10 information for the multiple independent participating product suppliers,  
11 wherein:  
12 the multiple independent participating product suppliers may include any of  
13 participating product manufacturers, participating product distributors, and  
14 participating product retailers, and  
15 the multiple independent product suppliers offer products of a common  
16 product category;  
17 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
18 processor being programmed therefor, automatically receiving, from multiple  
19 participating product suppliers, order information pertaining to orders placed  
20 by multiple product purchasers with the multiple participating product  
21 suppliers;  
22 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
23 processor being programmed therefor, automatically entering the received  
24 order information into an order database, the order database being operatively  
25 linked to the programmed computer processor and including order information  
26 pertaining to  
27 pending orders placed with multiple participating product suppliers by multiple  
28 independent product purchasers, wherein the multiple independent  
29 product purchasers may include any of participating product  
30 manufacturers, participating product distributors, participating product  
31 retailers, non-participating product manufacturers, non-participating

product distributors, non-participating product retailers, and retail product purchasers, and fulfilled orders placed with multiple participating product suppliers by multiple product purchasers and fulfilled by the multiple participating product suppliers;

under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer processor being programmed therefor, automatically searching, for each order placed by each product purchaser, the supplier database to attempt to locate each ordered product listed in the placed order and available for delivery from a corresponding participating product supplier;

under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer processor being programmed therefor, automatically transmitting instructions for delivery, for each order placed by each product purchaser, of each ordered and located product to the product purchaser from the corresponding participating product supplier, thereby fulfilling the order;

under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer processor being programmed therefor, automatically updating order information in the order database pertaining to each delivered product;

under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer processor being programmed therefor, automatically updating the product inventory information pertaining to each delivered product in the supplier database; and

under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer processor being programmed therefor, automatically creating a financial accounting record for each delivered product,

further comprising:

under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer processor being programmed therefor, enabling a first participating product supplier to conceal its identity from a selected subset of the multiple participating product suppliers for which ordered products, listed in orders placed with the eligible subset of the multiple participating product suppliers,



are available for delivery from the first participating product supplier to a product purchaser;

under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer processor being programmed therefor, enabling the first participating product supplier to conceal its identity from a selected subset of the multiple participating product suppliers from which ordered products, listed in orders placed with the first participating supplier, may be delivered to a product purchaser; or

under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer processor being programmed therefor, enabling the first participating product supplier to conceal the identity of a product purchaser from another participating product supplier from which an ordered product, listed in an order placed with the first participating provider by the product purchaser, is delivered to the product purchaser.

34. **(currently amended)** A method for multiply-integrated ~~system~~ for product inventory, sales, and distribution, comprising the steps of:

under control of a programmed computer processor, the programmed computer processor being programmed therefor, automatically receiving product identifying information, product pricing information, and product inventory information from multiple participating product suppliers and entering the information into a supplier database, the supplier database being operatively linked to the programmed computer processor and including product identifying information, product inventory information, and product pricing information for the multiple independent participating product suppliers, wherein:

the multiple independent participating product suppliers may include any of participating product manufacturers, participating product distributors, and participating product retailers, and the multiple independent product suppliers offer products of a common product category;

17 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
18 processor being programmed therefor, automatically receiving, from multiple  
19 participating product suppliers, order information pertaining to orders placed  
20 by multiple product purchasers with the multiple participating product  
21 suppliers;

22 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
23 processor being programmed therefor, automatically entering the received  
24 order information into an order database, the order database being operatively  
25 linked to the programmed computer processor and including order information  
26 pertaining to

27 pending orders placed with multiple participating product suppliers by multiple  
28 independent product purchasers, wherein the multiple independent  
29 product purchasers may include any of participating product  
30 manufacturers, participating product distributors, participating product  
31 retailers, non-participating product manufacturers, non-participating  
32 product distributors, non-participating product retailers, and retail product  
33 purchasers, and

34 fulfilled orders placed with multiple participating product suppliers by multiple  
35 product purchasers and fulfilled by the multiple participating product  
36 suppliers;

37 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
38 processor being programmed therefor, automatically searching, for each order  
39 placed by each product purchaser, the supplier database to attempt to locate  
40 each ordered product listed in the placed order and available for delivery from  
41 a corresponding participating product supplier;

42 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
43 processor being programmed therefor, automatically transmitting instructions  
44 for delivery, for each order placed by each product purchaser, of each ordered  
45 and located product to the product purchaser from the corresponding  
46 participating product supplier, thereby fulfilling the order;

47 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
48 processor being programmed therefor, automatically updating order  
49 information in the order database pertaining to each delivered product;

50 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
51 processor being programmed therefor, automatically updating the product  
52 inventory information pertaining to each delivered product in the supplier  
53 database;

54 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
55 processor being programmed therefor, automatically creating a financial  
56 accounting record for each delivered product;

57 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
58 processor being programmed therefor, automatically aggregating in real time  
59 order information pertaining to multiple orders placed by multiple product  
60 purchasers; and

61 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
62 processor being programmed therefor, automatically transmitting instructions  
63 for delivery of ordered products, listed in the aggregated order, from a selected  
64 participating product supplier, the selected participating product supplier being  
65 selected based on a supplier figure-of-merit.

1 35. **(previously presented)** The method of Claim 34, further comprising:

2 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
3 processor being programmed therefor, automatically selecting the selected  
4 participating product supplier based on information in the supplier database; or

5 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
6 processor being programmed therefor, automatically receiving bids in real time  
7 from at least one participating product supplier and automatically selecting in  
8 real time from among bidding participating product suppliers the selected  
9 participating product supplier.

1 36. **(previously presented)** The method of Claim 35, further comprising the step of:  
2 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
3 processor being programmed therefor, automatically selecting in real time a  
4 newly-selected participating product supplier to replace the selected  
5 participating product supplier based on updated information in the supplier  
6 database or updated bids received from the bidding participating product  
7 suppliers.

1 37. **(previously presented)** The method of Claim 34, further comprising the step of:  
2 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
3 processor being programmed therefor, automatically aggregating in real time  
4 order information pertaining to multiple orders placed in a physical location of  
5 a participating product supplier and placed remotely with the participating  
6 product supplier.

1 38. **(previously presented)** The method of Claim 34, further comprising the step of:  
2 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
3 processor being programmed therefor, automatically aggregating in real time  
4 order information pertaining to orders placed with multiple participating product  
5 suppliers.

1 39. **(previously presented)** The method of Claim 38, further comprising the step of:  
2 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
3 processor being programmed therefor, automatically aggregating in real time  
4 order information pertaining to orders placed with multiple participating product  
5 retailers.

1 40. **(previously presented)** The method of Claim 38, further comprising the step of:  
2 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
3 processor being programmed therefor, enabling a first participating product

4 supplier to select an eligible subset of the multiple participating product  
5 suppliers for aggregating order information.

- 1 41. **(currently amended)** A method for multiply-integrated ~~system~~ for product  
2 inventory, sales, and distribution, comprising the steps of:  
3 under control of a programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
4 processor being programmed therefor, automatically receiving product  
5 identifying information, product pricing information, and product inventory  
6 information from multiple participating product suppliers and entering the  
7 information into a supplier database, the supplier database being operatively  
8 linked to the programmed computer processor and including product  
9 identifying information, product inventory information, and product pricing  
10 information for the multiple independent participating product suppliers,  
11 wherein:  
12 the multiple independent participating product suppliers may include any of  
13 participating product manufacturers, participating product distributors, and  
14 participating product retailers, and  
15 the multiple independent product suppliers offer products of a common  
16 product category;  
17 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
18 processor being programmed therefor, automatically receiving, from multiple  
19 participating product suppliers, order information pertaining to orders placed  
20 by multiple product purchasers with the multiple participating product  
21 suppliers;  
22 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
23 processor being programmed therefor, automatically entering the received  
24 order information into an order database, the order database being operatively  
25 linked to the programmed computer processor and including order information  
26 pertaining to  
27 pending orders placed with multiple participating product suppliers by multiple  
28 independent product purchasers, wherein the multiple independent  
29 product purchasers may include any of participating product

30 manufacturers, participating product distributors, participating product  
31 retailers, non-participating product manufacturers, non-participating  
32 product distributors, non-participating product retailers, and retail product  
33 purchasers, and  
34 fulfilled orders placed with multiple participating product suppliers by multiple  
35 product purchasers and fulfilled by the multiple participating product  
36 suppliers;  
37 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
38 processor being programmed therefor, automatically searching, for each order  
39 placed by each product purchaser, the supplier database to attempt to locate  
40 each ordered product listed in the placed order and available for delivery from  
41 a corresponding participating product supplier;  
42 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
43 processor being programmed therefor, automatically transmitting instructions  
44 for delivery, for each order placed by each product purchaser, of each ordered  
45 and located product to the product purchaser from the corresponding  
46 participating product supplier, thereby fulfilling the order;  
47 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
48 processor being programmed therefor, automatically updating order  
49 information in the order database pertaining to each delivered product;  
50 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
51 processor being programmed therefor, automatically updating the product  
52 inventory information pertaining to each delivered product in the supplier  
53 database; and  
54 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
55 processor being programmed therefor, automatically creating a financial  
56 accounting record for each delivered product,  
57 further comprising:  
58 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed  
59 computer processor being programmed therefor, automatically adjusting  
60 local product inventory for the multiple participating product suppliers by

61 automatically monitoring in real time local product inventory information in  
62 the supplier database,  
63 in response to local product inventory information in the supplier database,  
64 automatically transmitting instructions for transfer of products out of  
65 local product inventory of a first participating product retailer into local  
66 product inventory of a second participating product retailer, and  
67 in response to the transfer of local product inventory, automatically  
68 updating the local product inventory information in the supplier  
69 database.

1 42. **(previously presented)** The method of Claim 41, wherein the transferred local  
2 product inventory includes used product, rare product, collectible product, private-  
3 label product, or out-of-production product.

1 43. **(previously presented)** The method of Claim 42, further comprising:  
2 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
3 processor being programmed therefor, consigning to the second participating  
4 product retailer transferred used product, rare product, collectible product,  
5 private-label product, or out-of-production product

1 44. **(previously presented)** The method of Claim 41, further comprising:  
2 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
3 processor being programmed therefor, enabling the first participating product  
4 retailer to select an eligible subset of the multiple participating product retailers  
5 to which product inventory may be transferred; or  
6 under control of the programmed computer processor, the programmed computer  
7 processor being programmed therefor, enabling the second participating  
8 product retailer to select an eligible subset of the multiple participating product  
9 retailers from which product inventory may be transferred.